

LATIN NOTES

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MAKING LATIN INTERESTING

Interest has long been held to be of vital importance in education. We all know that people, old and young, will spend untold hours in doing that which holds their interest. We also know that the quality of work done under the spur of interest is uniformly of higher quality and that the fatigue resulting from such effort is considerably lighter. The chief educational use that has been made of this knowledge, however, has been in the direction of allowing pupils to elect subjects in which they think they are interested. This cannot be regarded as an intelligent application of the principle, for surely there is no evidence that results have improved under the elective system in secondary schools.

Frequently the pupil has gone from failure in one subject to failure in another in his quest of an education that can be obtained without effort, and in the end has dropped out of school because it held nothing to interest him. His opinion is that there is something wrong with education. May he not be right? Is there not something tragically wrong with an educational system in which so large a number of boys and girls are pursuing their work drably to a mediocre result, even though offered a wide range of choice? Latitude in election has neither increased interest nor improved the quality of work. Indeed it is a question whether it has not actually resulted in greater inferiority in both interest and the quality of work. This application, therefore, of the doctrine of interest has proved itself to be erroneous and ineffectual.

Must we accept the idea that education is essentially a drudging process and as such must be made the most of? Happily this is not the only alternative before us. The true doctrine of interest says, *It is the function of the school and of the teacher to interest the pupil in what he needs to study.* Any subject taught in secondary schools can be made interesting to almost all pupils, if properly motivated. It is not necessary that such motivation pertain to the ephemeral interests of youth or directly to man's acquisitive instincts. It is natural for human beings to be interested in the growth and development of their own abilities, to enjoy conquering difficulties, to have an enthusiasm in doing anything that is an expression of inner power, a revelation of any sort of superior worth. The proper motivation of a subject aims, not to convince the pupil of the value of the information to be gained from a study of the subject, but to show him how the proper pursuit of it must inevitably result in the development of certain definite powers within him, in opportunities for the expression of natural desires for self-revelation, and for the gaining of those qualities of mind and of character that are the fundamentals of success everywhere in life. All subjects are capable of this type of motivation, though some offer wider opportunities than others.

Can Latin be made interesting? Can the study of this subject, so long considered a hard, dull, uninterest-

ing task, be made appealing to the average boy and girl of high school age? An experience of more than five years in teaching Latin to groups of "slow" pupils has shown that to most of them it can be made not only interesting, but even fascinating. The many visitors to these classes have remarked about the unusual interest displayed by the pupils. Some of them have used the word *enthusiasm*. It has seemed a surprise to most that boys and girls could possibly be so engrossed in the study of Latin.

Such a result may seem magical, but there is no magic in the method of obtaining it. Interest is just as easy to obtain as disinterest or boredom. Either result comes purely through the operation of the law of cause and effect. If certain methods in the past have generally resulted in making the pursuit of Latin a disagreeable task, the proper methods will just as inevitably result in making it pleasurable, particularly to the "slower" pupils. The causative factors involved in the production of interest and pleasure as results involve the following things:

1. Motivation
2. Subject matter
3. The method of the recitation
4. The mental attitude of the teacher

A very considerable part of every beginning Latin class enters upon the work of the subject with a preconceived notion of a more or less repellent nature toward the subject. This means that pupils have at the outset a mental attitude which, unless changed, leads directly to dissatisfaction, causing the work to degenerate into an endurance test. Many pupils are doomed to failure before they begin, not because of any lack of ability, but because of this preconceived dislike.

The first function of the teacher, therefore, is to dislodge any existing aversion or lurking indifference by establishing a powerful motive for studying Latin. No attempt, however, is made to present the entire case in behalf of Latin the first day. A talk of four or five minutes is sufficient. A few simple statements are made to the effect that we are going to have a very interesting time in our Latin work. We expect to enjoy every minute of the recitation period. In addition we expect to have our wits sharpened and our ability to think quickly and accurately greatly increased. A statement may be added to emphasize the fact that the ability to think quickly and accurately is a valuable asset in life.

Immediately then, on the first day, we take up the vocabulary of the first lesson which contains such words as *carrus, hortus, equus, amicus, dominus, Sextus, Marcus, quis, quid, habet, and salutat*. A review of the subject and object in English is given, and this is followed by an explanation of the nominative and accusative cases and the case endings in the singular.

Then the following suggestion is made: "Now we are ready to discover how quickly and accurately you can

hear, think, and speak." The work becomes at once a sort of game, as the teacher gives sentences in Latin to be translated into English. Several such sentences as the following are given:

1. Dominus equum habet.
2. Sextus dominum salutatur.

Then extra attention is demanded by inverting the subject and object in a part of the sentences:

1. Hortum Marcus habet.
2. Dominus Sextum salutatur.
3. Dominum Sextus salutatur.

Questions to be answered in Latin are next given:

1. Quis amicum salutatur?
2. Quid amicus habet?

When an answer has been correctly given orally, it is written on the board to test the ability of pupils to see and to spell. In this writing all long marks are demanded. To stimulate the desire of pupils to see every letter and every long mark in a word, the statement is made in a half humorous way that many of the members of the class cannot see what they look at. This is, of course, hard for them to believe, and stimulates them to a desire to prove their ability to see accurately. Most of them end by proving their inaccuracy of sight, and that is the teacher's opportunity to plant another subtle suggestion as to the value of Latin in developing accuracy of vision, which leads directly to greater accuracy in thought.

Finally English sentences are given for translation into Latin. In this work also the correct translation is written on the board by the pupil. In case all of this work is not covered the first day, it is repeated and completed on the following day.

It is impossible in this article to present the details of subsequent lessons. It must suffice to say that every opportunity that presents itself is taken advantage of to show the pupils that the study of Latin is an excellent medium for developing mental qualities, processes, and habits that will be of immense value to them in whatever calling they choose. To accomplish this, long talks or arguments are not necessary. A subtle suggestion at the moment when the evidence is at hand has a more potent influence than a lecture. Following this method, the writer has never failed to sell Latin to the great majority of any class and to arouse enthusiasm at the very beginning.

The teacher should not attempt to present his whole case at the outset, but should give just enough for motivation, and should always have something in reserve, so that there will be no necessity for any great amount of repetition. The method that is most effective is the repeated suggestion, in connection with fresh evidence, that Latin is a means of unfolding valuable intellectual and character qualities. Among the ideas planted from time to time those that follow are the most important.

1. The ability to be accurate is not inherited, but developed by doing things accurately. Latin compels accuracy.

2. Clear and accurate enunciation is a valuable possession in any walk of life. The oral work in Latin develops the habit of proper enunciation.

3. Mental power depends upon the organization of mental processes.

4. The variety and accuracy of mental processes depend upon the right kind of activity for their development.

5. Repetition of the process is necessary for fixing these processes.

6. Latin furnishes the means for developing clear and definite mental processes and demands the needed repetition for fixing them.

7. Success in life demands self-reliant effort. Latin develops habits of self-reliance and persistent effort, as it can be mastered only through the exercise of these qualities.

8. The habit of mastery and the quality of confidence are prerequisites of success in the struggle of life. The learning of Latin is a course in mastery, not only over the subject, but equally over imperfect mental processes and bad habits of application.

9. Latin trains the mind to take into account several different factors and to arrive at an accurate conclusion.

The last of these ideas is particularly effective in arousing the pupils' interest in Latin as a means of growth in power; and the evidence is always at hand. At first many pupils, because of thoughtless, hasty habits, find it difficult to make a choice at all times between the nominative and accusative singular and get the right answer. But they learn, and when they have learned to do it with a fair degree of accuracy they realize that they have made a conquest; and this conquest offers the teacher an opportunity to increase the pupil's satisfaction in the result. That increased satisfaction in turn means increased interest in Latin.

The next step is the addition of the plural of the nominative and the accusative. The attention of the pupil is called to the fact that he now has an opportunity to increase his power and accuracy by making a choice among four factors. The statement at the beginning of a recitation, "Now let's see how many can think things out to an absolutely accurate result," works wonders in the interest, attention, and thoughtfulness of the class. As other cases of nouns and adjectives are taken up, the thought is held before the pupils that their ability is expanding and their usefulness growing every time they add to the number of factors to be considered before arriving at a correct conclusion. Whenever the problem placed before the pupil is shown to be a test of his ability, his self-respect and his intelligence are challenged, and few are willing to fail under the circumstances.

A few in almost every class through laziness, indifference, and neglect have developed the "I can't" consciousness. But it can be cultivated out of them. Whenever such a pupil fails or says, "I can't do it," he is told there is no such thing as *can't*. He is also told that the thing he says he cannot do is the very first thing that he is to learn how to do—and without assistance. He is instructed to study the point in question in the textbook and then to go to the board and do the work. He is assigned to an inconspicuous board at the rear of the room, where he will be in view of the teacher, but out of the gaze of the class. If he fails in his first attempt, he is required to try again, and again if necessary, until he straightens the matter out for and by himself. Then his attention is called to the fact that care and persistence lead to the desired results. After a few experiences of this kind, the most hopeless gain confidence and cease entirely to say, "I can't." And when this faith in themselves is reestablished, the hopeless have become different human beings. One of the worst cases of this kind that the writer has ever had became one of the greatest workers, and through sheer will and work overcame the handicap of years of failure and consequent self-depreciation, and ended by making a real success of her Latin.

The right choice of subject matter in the first year class will go far toward making easier the work of the teacher in maintaining the interest of the group at high pitch. It goes without saying that the average boy and girl of secondary school age are not profoundly interested in the implements and methods of Roman warfare. The introduction, therefore, of Caesarian ideas and military vocabulary into first year work has been a tremendous mistake, when looked at from the stand-

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J. H. Hargrave
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point of interest. High school boys and girls are awakening to social interests of all kinds, particularly those that concern everyday life, even though it be quite primitive in nature. They will go to sleep over sentences like these:

1. Cōpiae magnā cum audaciā pugnant.
2. Galli magno cum studiō oppidum oppugnant.

But they show keen interest in sentences dealing with ancient village life, like the following:

1. Pueri in viis vicī multōs ludōs habent.
2. Puellae magnae matrēs cibum parāre iuvant.
3. Pueri maiōres natū in clivis ovēs cūrant.
4. Hodie discipuli cum magistrō clivōs et silvās explorant.

Even sentences like the following appeal to their sense of humor:

1. Magister pensa molesta pueris saepe parat.
2. Magister puerōs pensa magnā cum cūrā parāre iubet.

If the text in use does not contain these words of everyday life, it is an easy matter for the teacher to supply them. By doing so he gains more than the interest derived from the words themselves. He wins the confidence and admiration of the class. If he could hear what the members say outside the recitation room, something like the following would frequently greet him: "He is an interesting teacher: he gives us something outside the textbook." That attitude of the pupil toward the teacher is worth more in obtaining results than all the refined methods in the world.

CHARLES M. STEBBINS

Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

NOTE: This article will be supplemented by a further discussion of the subject in a later issue of *LATIN NOTES*.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ROMAN CHARACTER

Showerman¹ thus explains Rome's rise to a position of supremacy among the early towns of Latium: "It was not mere chance that set Rome apart from other cities of the Latin land. Nor was her rise due directly to an advantageous site. It was men that made her great, men as the instrument of necessity. The character of the early men of Rome was forged on the anvil of hardship. It was a rough life in the open that the shepherd-farmers of the first kings led, the worthy tradition of the life of their migrant northern fathers. The advantages of situation praised by the patriotic descendants of the days when Rome had become part of the outside world, to them were hardly present."

Before the Punic Wars the Romans were a simple sturdy folk with all the hardy virtues of pioneers. They were engaged on the one hand, in a strenuous struggle with their environment to earn a livelihood, and on the other, in an equally strenuous struggle with hostile neighbors to maintain an independent existence. This continual struggle gave the character of the Roman a serious turn, and outwardly marked him with a grave and dignified bearing. He early learned the value of discipline, perseverance, and courage in the pursuit of success, and as a result of his successes he developed a sense of power and a desire to rule.

As head of his family, the father had supreme authority over all its members, whom he ruled with strictness. The very fact, however, that he had supreme power over them made him responsible for their well-being and gave him a sense of duty to his family that made him steadfast and dependable. It was this keen appreciation that the Roman had of the

inseparable connection between privileges and obligations that went far to make him great.

The organization of the Roman State was modeled after that of the family, with supreme authority delegated to a senate consisting of the heads of the principal families. As each head of a family expected implicit obedience from the other members of the family, so he, too, was equally punctilious in his obedience to the State. Next to his obligations to his family, the chief duty of the Roman was to the State. This duty was largely discharged through service as a soldier. With equal facility the early men of Rome tilled the fields, fought against the foe, and made laws to govern their conduct in relation to one another and to the outside world. This rough and ready character of the early Roman is well illustrated by the story of Cincinnatus, who left his plow to become dictator.

The difficulty with which he obtained a livelihood led the early Roman to be frugal in his habits; and his life of action made him simple in his ways and ideas, with a rustic distrust of luxury of body and of mind. These very virtues, moreover, in an exaggerated form became faults in the character of the early Roman. He was often harsh, almost to the point of cruelty, and lacked an appreciation of the finer things of life. On the whole he was practical, possessed hard common sense, and was thoroughly conservative. The substantial character of the old Roman is shown by the spirit with which he met the defeat at Cannae, when the very existence of the State was threatened.

At the close of the Punic Wars Rome was mistress of the Mediterranean world. Now circumstances made it possible for the harsh burden of military duty to be lightened. At the same time the money flowing into Rome in payment of the indemnity of conquered Carthage, the large number of slaves acquired as the result of the Wars, and the abundant supply of grain available from Sicily at a price below the cost of its production in Italy made the struggle to earn a living immeasurably easier. With the lightening of his burden the harsh, stern character of the Roman gradually softened, and his contact with the highly developed civilization of the Greeks in Sicily and southern Italy awakened in him a desire for culture and the material luxuries of life. He devoted himself ardently to education and the arts; his table was more sumptuous, and a considerable part of his time was given to the pursuit of pleasure.

In the succeeding years the power of Rome was increased until it extended over a great part of the ancient world, and wealth in ever widening currents flowed into her coffers. Luxury continued to flourish, and the wholesome discipline of family life was relaxed. During the period of conflict beginning with Marius and Sulla many citizens of the old stock perished as the result of proscriptions, and later under the early Empire systematic efforts were made further to reduce the numbers of this class. The places they left vacant were filled by freedmen and by foreigners who in large measure lacked the sturdy virtues of the old-time Romans. Loss of political rights had come with the introduction of the Empire, and under the suppression and tyranny of some of the rulers who followed Augustus even literary pursuits were robbed of their interest. Consequently, it is not surprising that a large proportion of the people should limit their desires to such material things as "bread and the circus." Roman character had undergone a radical change since the day of Cato, who in his *Origins of Rome* truly said, "Adversity tames us, and teaches us our true line of conduct, while good fortune is apt to warp us from the way of prudence."

ROSS G. FROUNICK

Bellefonte Academy, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

¹*Eternal Rome*, vol. 1, p. 37. For an account of the character of the Romans, see pp. 76-107; 136-148; 208-224. Cf. also Fowler, *Rome*, pp. 7-17; 55-83; 119-135.

²Quoted from Fowler, *Rome*, p. 15.

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE

It has seemed best to members of the Council of the AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE to have but one price for subscriptions to LATIN NOTES and that price, \$1.00, a sum which shall automatically include membership in the League. The SERVICE BUREAU has hitherto been receiving subscriptions of two kinds, one at 75 cents and another at \$1.00, the latter carrying with it a membership in the League. The two prices have caused considerable confusion and it has therefore seemed best to abolish the 75 cent subscription. Payment of \$1.00, therefore, will make you a member of the AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE and at the same time will enroll you as a subscriber to LATIN NOTES. However, if you are not particularly interested in the welfare of secondary Latin and Greek (the field to which the activities of the SERVICE BUREAU FOR CLASSICAL TEACHERS are confined) and wish only to support the League by becoming a member, you may not care to have the LATIN NOTES sent to you. In this case, indicate your desire when sending in your application for membership.

Subscriptions expire with this issue unless they have already been renewed for the coming year. Readers will greatly relieve the embarrassment of the editor in deciding how many copies of the October issue are to be printed by indicating at once their feeling regarding the renewal of their subscriptions. It is just as easy to forward \$1.00 now as it will be next fall. Such promptness will be greatly appreciated. Correspondence in this connection may be sent to Rollin H. Tanner, Secretary of the AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE, New York University, University Heights, New York City, or to Frances E. Sabin, Director of the SERVICE BUREAU FOR CLASSICAL TEACHERS, Teachers College, 525 West 120th St., New York City.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The three pamphlets listed below have just been published by the AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE and may be secured by addressing the Secretary, Rollin H. Tanner, New York University, University Heights, New York City. They will prove to be very interesting to teachers of Latin.

1. *The Status of Latin in the Junior High School*, by W. L. CARR; 7 cents. Reprinted from *The Classical Journal*, Jan. 1928.
2. *The Classics and Pure Science*, by ARTHUR E. HILL; 5 cents.
3. *The Classical Invasion of English Literature*, by H. A. WATT; 10 cents.

Reduced prices will be made for larger quantities.

Those who are interested in Latin readers to accompany the texts commonly used in the high school course will be greatly pleased with a series of four small volumes (sold at 60 cents each) which have appeared recently in England under the title *Arva Latina*, and are now being sold by the Educational Department of E. P. Dutton and Company, 681 Fifth Avenue, New York. They are listed as follows:

- Book I. *Simple Stories told in Classical Latin*. By G. T. ATKINSON.
- Book II. *Simple passages from Latin authors*. Edited by G. TURBERVILLE.
- Book III. *The Story of Rome from Latin Authors*. Edited by Rev. T. A. Moxon.
- Book IV. *Latin Unseens*. Edited by D. S. MACNUTT.

The Traveler's Book of Verse, a collection of 100 favorite English poems relating to places and personalities in Italy, compiled by FREDERICK E. EMMONS and T. W. HUNTINGTON, has just been published by

Henry Holt and Company, New York City. Price \$2.50. Lovers of Italy will not need to be urged to examine a copy of this book and to add it to their library shelves.

With Caesar's Legions, by R. F. WELLS, an account of the adventures of two Roman boys who were with Caesar's army in Gaul, has long been known to Latin teachers, but perhaps the appearance of the second volume, *On Land and Sea with Caesar* (1926), is not yet a matter of common knowledge. These books are full of human interest for the high school student. They may be obtained for \$1.50 each from Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company, Boston.

Voadica, by IAN C. HANNAH, is an exciting romance of the time of Hadrian and is concerned with the efforts of the Romans to defend the Roman Wall against the hordes of the Britons. It is published by Longmans, Green and Company, New York City. Price \$2.00.

The Ullman-Clark Test of Classical References and Allusions is being published in revised form by the University of Iowa, Iowa City. For further information and for copies address the University.

MATERIAL FOR DISTRIBUTION

I. In Mimeographed Form

This material is lent to teachers upon payment of postage, or is sold for five cents per item unless otherwise indicated. The numbering is continued from the April issue of LATIN NOTES.

321. Questions in Latin to test the knowledge of content of the fourth oration against Catiline, by Florence Waterman, The Winsor School, Boston.
322. Writing Latin in the junior high school—suggestions for young teachers. Contributed by Margaret Englar, Baltimore, Md. Reprinted from Bulletin I, *Latin in the Junior High School*, formerly published by the SERVICE BUREAU FOR CLASSICAL TEACHERS. This edition is exhausted and will be replaced by a similar bulletin next year.
323. Bibliography of magazine articles on the Report of the Classical Investigation. Prepared by BYRON K. HUNSBERGER, University of Pennsylvania.
324. Bibliography of magazine articles on the teaching of Latin, covering the period of Sept. 1, 1923 to June 30, 1927. Prepared by BYRON K. HUNSBERGER, University of Pennsylvania.
325. A bibliography for Roman banquets. Reprinted from the CLASSICAL JOURNAL, February, 1926.

II. Latin Notes Supplements (I-XXXVI)

III. Bulletins (II-X)

Important Announcements

1. Bound volumes of LATIN NOTES I, II, III, IV, and V may be secured for \$1.15 each plus postage. Two issues are lacking from Volume I and one from Volume II. Otherwise the editions are complete. The LATIN NOTES SUPPLEMENTS (I-XXXVI) also appear in one volume. Price \$4.00.

2. Instructors in charge of courses for the training of Latin teachers in summer sessions may obtain free of charge packages of Announcement Slips giving information about the AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE and the SERVICE BUREAU FOR CLASSICAL TEACHERS, two leaflets containing lists of Service Bureau material, and several sample copies of both LATIN NOTES and LATIN NOTES SUPPLEMENTS. An estimate as to the size of the class will be helpful. A copy of Part I of the Latin Investigation Report will be lent for a period of a month.

